THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) While there are varying estiamtes about Pakistan's and China's Defence expenditure, India's Defence expenditure has been in the region of 2.3% in the last ten years.

(b) and (c) There is no decision of the Government so far to set up Aerospace Command. However, adequate measures are in place to address concerns of national security keeping in view the changing threat perception.

Civilian casualties in firing range in Uttarakhand

†4480. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that several civilians were killed in straying of bullets during practice exercises and on explosion of grenades later in various firing ranges of Army in Uttarakhand;

(b) if so, the total number of such incidents over the years, with number of casualties therein;

(c) whether there is a plan to give job to a person each of the affected family in Army; and

(d) if so, whether there is a proposal to increase compensation given in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) and (b) Since the creation of Uttarakhand State, one such incident has been reported at Raipur Field Firing Range, Dehradun in April, 2007, in which one civilian was killed and two injured.

(c) There is no such provision under the existing policy.

(d) No such proposal is under the consideration of the Government.

Defence deals between India and Israel

4481. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(a) whether top officials and military personnel visited Israel for discussion on the wide-ranging defence deals between the two countries;

(b) whether Israeli defence contractor ELTA has become the first firm that bagged a deal worth Rs. 833 crore for medium power radar for the IAF and the company will invest 30 per cent of the amount back into Indian industry.

(c) whether India have bought weapon systems worth $5 billion from Israel in the last five years; and

(d) to what extent the visit of Chief of Army has helped in reaching agreement with Israel on defence?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) Official visits between India and Israel take place to discuss issues of mutual interest including defence procurement issues. Defence Procurements are, however, done as per laid down procedure.

(b) M/s. ELTA, Israel is the lowest bidder in response to a Request for Proposal (RFP) issued for procurement of some Radars for the Indian Air Force. However, no contract has been signed with the firm.

(c) The defence purchases from Israel during the period 2002—2007 have been over US $ 5 billion.

(d) Chief of the Army Staff visited Israel from 5th to 7th March, 2007. This was a regular goodwill visit.

Kidnapping gangs in States

4482. SHRI MOTIUR RAHMAN: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether, as per the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) report, 741 gangs are involved in kidnapping for ransom across the country, 87 groups are specializing in abducting minor girls for prostitution and 47 are operating for kidnapping children and converting them to beggars;

(b) the details of all such gangs, State-wise, and the action taken against the gangs identified by CBI; and

(c) how many children were kidnapped during the last one year in Bihar and how many of them were rescued?